The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 106: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/C.3/54/L.11)

1. **Ms. Otgontsetseg** (Mongolia), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.11 on cooperatives in social development, said that Greece, Guinea, Italy, Kyrgyzstan and Thailand had joined the sponsors. In the fourth preambular paragraph and paragraph 4, the phrase "and their plus-five-review special sessions" should be amended to read "including their plus-five reviews"; in paragraph 4 (b), the words "establishment and" should be inserted before "development"; in paragraph 5, the word "local," should be inserted before the word "national".

2. Cooperatives could make a valuable contribution to the achievement of social and economic development goals. In many countries they were economically significant and, whether as production units or service providers, boosted employment. Social service cooperatives afforded a means of responding to the special needs of groups such as young children and the elderly. The justification for the draft resolution lay in those and other benefits of cooperatives and in the fact that, as the Secretary-General's report in document A/54/57 showed, many countries were updating their legislation on cooperatives, making the adoption of guidelines on supporting such entities particularly timely.

Agenda item 109: Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/C.3/54/L.14 and L.16)

3. **Ms. Aguiar** (Dominican Republic), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.14 on an international day for the elimination of violence against women, said that France had joined the sponsors. Thanks to determined efforts, significant progress had been made in promoting women's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights throughout the world. Landmarks in that process included the Vienna and Beijing Conferences, the adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Ouagadougou Declaration and the proclamation in Latin America and the Caribbean of 25 November as International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

4. Much, however, remained to be done. In many places, laws and practices still limited women's access to work, and it was common for women and girls to have only restricted access to higher education or certain fields of study. There was also widespread *de jure* and de facto discrimination against women with regard to marriage, the family, divorce, reproduction, nationality, and the management and inheritance of property. To that must be added the phenomenon of the feminization of poverty and the still worse scourge, which affected both developed and developing countries, of violence against women.

5. UNIFEM figures showed that worldwide at least 20 per cent of women had been physically or sexually assaulted by a man and that every year 2 million girls aged between 5 and 15 fell victims to traffickers, were sold or were forced into prostitution. Violence against women respected neither national nor social boundaries: it was present in rich and poor countries and in and outside the home. Domestic violence was particularly loathsome, a denial of the qualities and principles that set human beings apart from the animals. Violence against women was an obstacle to the fuller development of the human personality and overcoming it required the combined efforts of men and women.

6. The date of 25 November had first been declared International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in June 1981, at the first Feminist Encounter for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Bogota. The declaration had been to commemorate the three Mirabal sisters, who had been brutally murdered in their own country on 25 November 1960 on the orders of a despot whose very existence history should forget. Her delegation and the co-sponsors hoped that the international community as a whole would now adopt that date as an annual reminder that the world would not be a better place until women could hold up their heads in the full enjoyment of human dignity.

7. **Mr. Al-Saidi** (Kuwait) said that Kuwait had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

8. **Ms. Biayan** (Romania), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.16 on the United Nations Development Fund for Women, said that Croatia, Nicaragua, and Suriname had joined the sponsors. The activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women in the field of women's empowerment and gender equality were comprehensively described in the Secretary-General's note A/54/225 and had been reviewed in detail in the statement by the Executive Director of UNIFEM to the Committee. The draft resolution, which she briefly summarized, referred to concrete initiatives by the Fund in implementation of its mandate and contained recommendations for the focus of future action. The sponsors considered that its adoption would make an important contribution towards the Fund's work on behalf of women's rights and gender equality.

Agenda item 107: Crime prevention and criminal justice *(continued)* (A/54/3, A/54/69-E/1999/8 and Add.1, A/54/289 and 340, A/C.3/54/2, A/C.3/54/L.3-L.6)

Agenda item 108: International drug control *(continued)* (A/54/3 and 186, A/54/293-E/1999/19, A/54/314-S/1999/942 and A/C.3/54/L.7)

9. **Mr. Jassim** (Bahrain) said that his delegation wished to thank the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for his valuable introductory statement. Drugs were a plague that affected all societies without exception. In view of the threat which that problem posed to economic and social development, Bahrain was determined to control drugs. The steps that it had taken included the establishment of a rehabilitation centre, school consciousness-raising programmes, media broadcasts on the dangers of drugs, and the introduction of the death penalty or life imprisonment for drug traffickers.

10. His delegation wished to support the statements made on the subject of the death penalty by a number of States, including Singapore and Egypt, considering it the right of every State to promulgate the legislation appropriate to its culture and religious principles. He also wished to stress the importance of the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States. Bahrain had taken a number of drug control measures in cooperation with regional States and was a party to the relevant international conventions. He was confident that strengthened international cooperation and tireless endeavours would succeed in controlling that plague.

11. **Mr. Caldas De Moura** (Brazil) stressed the importance of international cooperation on transnational organized crime. Despite resource constraints, Brazil had been relentless in its efforts to combat crime; most recently, it became a party to a multilateral treaty on small arms. A revision of domestic law had been accompanied by measures against corruption, drug trafficking, money laundering and weapons smuggling, with greater emphasis now on prevention. Civil society had called for tougher regulations on small arms, leading to disarmament campaigns in cities and trade bans in certain Brazilian states. A national public security strategy was also being elaborated to coordinate the efforts of law enforcement agencies in combating the closely interrelated problems of drug trafficking and organized crime.

12. Anti-drug strategies must be multifaceted if they were to deal with prevention, treatment and rehabilitation as well as repression. Moreover, for the war on drugs to succeed, it must be waged according to the agreed principle of shared responsibility. The challenge was formidable, however the international community had never been better armed to fight transnational crime, given the high degree of consensus prevailing. That consensus must now be translated into joint action.

13. **Mr. Bocalandro** (Argentina) thanked Mr. Arlacchi for his introductory statement and for the important work done by the Centre for International Crime Prevention under his dynamic leadership. His delegation subscribed fully to the comments made by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group and commended the Mexican delegation for its efficient conduct of the negotiations on the draft omnibus resolution on the drug problem, which his own delegation wished to sponsor.

14. The twentieth special session of the General Assembly had reoriented the fight against the global drug problem, setting the strategy in that sphere for the opening decades of the new millennium. At that session, the President of Argentina had stressed the importance that his country attached to the principle of shared responsibility in fighting drugs and the fact that Argentina felt that the time was ripe to consider internationalizing the prosecution of drug trafficking.

15. Argentina fully supported the decisions reached at the special session and had therefore participated in the negotiations that had culminated in the Economic and Social Council's adoption of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, which the General Assembly was gratifyingly about to adopt. Argentina also welcomed the work done by the inter-sessional working group of the forty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

16. The prevention and punishment of organized crime, especially the elaboration of the draft convention and the related protocols, were further matters of great importance to his country. A text submitted by Argentina and another submitted by the United States of America formed the basis for the draft protocol on trafficking in, and illicit transport of women and children. Argentina hoped that the convention would be finalized as soon as possible and that it would not be limited to issues of cooperation between States, but would also address the definition of common legal criteria for the categorization and punishment of offences.

17. The Centre for International Crime Prevention had demonstrated its efficacy through, *inter alia*, its elaboration of the global programmes for the assessment of transnational organized crime, corruption and trafficking in human beings. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was a natural forum for discussing and dealing with those three problems, as well as crime prevention, penal systems,

youth justice and the like. It was to be congratulated on its hard work in preparation for the Tenth Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. Proof of Argentina's support for the Commission could be seen in the two seminars which the country had held on community participation in crime prevention. At the meetings, which had facilitated interaction between the authorities, academics and civil society, international experts had outlined a series of approaches and recommendations concerning crime prevention that would be discussed at the Vienna Congress.

18. **Mr. Al-Saidi** (Kuwait) said that the comprehensive statement made by the Executive Director of UNDCP had made clear the ever-growing dimensions of the problems facing every society as a result of drugs and international crime. Kuwait had promulgated drug-control legislation that covered all aspects of the problem. It did not, however, treat drug addicts as criminals, but provided them with rehabilitation facilities. It had established a national drug control committee responsible for policy on that issue, and was making every effort to educate the general public about the dangers posed by drugs.

19. Non-governmental organizations in Kuwait were playing an important part in the fight against drugs and in providing social and health care for addicts. The twentieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, held in 1998, had given a new, international dimension to drug control. Alternative development programmes must be established in countries where illicit drug crops were grown, and the problem of supply and demand must be solved.

20. The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provided that countries which had not abolished the death penalty should impose it only for the most serious crimes. In accordance with that provision, Kuwait imposed the death penalty for drug trafficking. Every State that chose to do so had the right to impose the death penalty. He therefore regretted the reintroduction before the General Assembly by the European Union of the issue of the death penalty, on which there was a well-known lack of consensus. He urged the European Union to understand and accept that lack of consensus, and respect the opinions of others.

21. **Ms. Cossa** (Mozambique) said that her delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by Swaziland on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Mozambique, another transit country, was also faced with the problems of drug trafficking and consumption. The Government had responded by introducing the necessary legislative machinery. Thanks also to the establishment of a centralized institutional mechanism for policy advocacy and interministerial coordination with branches throughout the country, considerable drug seizures had been made and increasing numbers of drug traffickers were being arrested and detained. It was a government priority to educate young people about drugs and provide for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers.

22. An issue of concern for developing countries like her own was the weakness of institutions responsible for border controls. Her delegation thus urged the international community to provide financial support for the training of customs officers and drug law enforcement personnel. In that connection, the efforts of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) were most welcome. Regional and international cooperation was indispensable for reducing the spread of drugs; it was in that context that new laws on extradition and money laundering were being drafted. Committed to building a better future for generations to come, Mozambique was determined to play its part in a global war against drugs.

23. **Mr. Sergiwa** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation wished to thank the Executive Director of UNDCP for his introductory statement on the two agenda items under discussion. International organized crime and its destructive effects on societies could not be dealt with by any one country in isolation. Strengthened international cooperation was therefore essential. Developed countries had a responsibility to provide technical, scientific and economic assistance to developing countries in order to combat crime. Unfortunately, some States took no part in the fight against transnational organized crime and failed to control money laundering operations in their territory.

24. His country was a party to all the relevant international conventions, and had enacted drug control legislation. His delegation affirmed the sovereign right of States to decide upon the legislative system that was appropriate for its society and capable of controlling national and transnational criminal activity. He therefore considered the draft resolution introduced by the European Union concerning the abolition of the death penalty as an infringement of that sovereign right and an attempt by some States to impose their values and laws on other States, ignoring the existence of other points of view.

25. If that was an attempt on the part of the States concerned to show respect for human life, they should recall that victims also had rights: the right to life of criminals could not be bought at the expense of innocent people. In his country, the death penalty was only imposed on those who represented a threat to society. He was optimistic that the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime

and the Treatment of Offenders would adopt strategies for the strengthening of international cooperation in controlling organized crime and would provide support for developing countries in combating all types of crime.

26. **Mr. Badrul Hisham** (Malaysia) said that his delegation associated itself fully with the statement made by Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Malaysia — a transit country and not a producer of drugs — was active in fostering regional and international cooperation in reducing demand and supply. The previous year had seen a significant increase in the number of Malaysian drug addicts. The Government had responded with a national drug strategy which aimed to create a drug-free generation by the year 2023. Given that crime threatened a country's stability, security, economic growth and development, the prime responsibility for fighting it lay with the national government. States had a sovereign right to determine their own legal systems, and it was in that context that Malaysia — a democratically elected Government reflecting the people's will — had made drug trafficking a capital offence.

27. Advances in modern communications made bilateral, regional and international coordination on crime all the more essential, particularly in regard to extradition, illicit trafficking and the smuggling of illegal migrants. The technology existed for improving information-sharing. Malaysia, for its part, stood ready to render assistance to any country engaged in combating transnational crime. Malaysia aimed to participate in regional efforts to counter money-laundering — *inter alia*, through information-sharing. It was also considering introducing legislation at the domestic level. Moreover, the Central Bank of Malaysia was taking steps to set up a working group to coordinate efforts in the financial sector, including through the promotion of public awareness of money laundering.

28. Malaysia welcomed measures to ensure the fair treatment of women by the criminal justice system. Domestic violence in Malaysia was now considered a criminal offence and penalized accordingly. Furthermore, a number of programmes had been implemented to raise awareness among men and women of their legal rights. While a crime-free world was an evident utopia, Malaysia would continue its efforts towards that goal; and the use of capital punishment was an integral part of those efforts.

29. **Mr. Bae Young Han** (Republic of Korea), speaking on item 107, said that great strides had been made that year by the international community with the commencement of formal negotiations on the draft convention against transnational organized crime. Despite the important groundwork already laid, there remained the task of eliminating the loopholes in countries' diverse legal systems, which were exploited by international crime. It was to be hoped that the political commitment of the international community would steer the consultations towards a successful conclusion. The Republic of Korea would be pressing for adoption of the instrument the following year. The Centre for International Crime Prevention (CICP) should receive additional resources from the Organization's regular budget to reflect its enlarged mandate; the Republic of Korea, for its part, would be increasing its voluntary contribution to the Fund in the year 2000.

30. His delegation welcomed the fact that the three projects adopted by CICP, dealing with illegal trafficking in human beings, corruption, and organized crime, reflected the suggestion made by the Republic of Korea the previous year that limited resources called for a more focused, goal-oriented approach. It was to be hoped that the Centre would continue to prioritize its activities and avoid duplication among projects. Of those projects, his Government placed particular emphasis on fighting corruption. Since corruption distorted competition between national economies, it required a multilateral response, which could most appropriately be spearheaded by CICP. The Republic of Korea was satisfied with the preparations for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, particularly the drafting of the Vienna declaration which should provide impetus to common efforts to build a safer global community.

31. Referring to item 108, he stressed the importance of adhering to the political and financial commitments made at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. The progress since made in reducing illicit drug supply and demand was most encouraging as was the agreement among Member States on guidelines for reporting on the implementation of the Global Programme of Action and on the follow-up to the special session. The Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development would help further national alternative development projects, which had met with considerable success in a number of countries thanks to strong domestic political will, and international support. There was no room, however, for complacency. As technological changes redefined the illicit drug market, it was imperative that the international community should sustain its commitment to information sharing and timely re-evaluation of the scope of substance control. The efforts by UNDCP, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) to develop a database

for those purposes were most welcome. In view of its crucial role in countering the drug problem, it was essential that additional resources be allocated to UNDCP and that its long-term funding be secured. In conclusion, the Republic of Korea reiterated its commitment to international crime prevention and drug control efforts.

32. **Ms. Aghadjanian** (Armenia) said that her delegation aligned itself with the statement made by Kazakhstan on behalf of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). No country was immune to the new security challenges posed by illicit drugs, organized crime and terrorism. Such issues had not been foreseen when the Charter of the United Nations had been drafted. The international community must therefore provide the same leadership and commitment applied to older problems. It was universally acknowledged that only by working together could States hope to deal with a situation which had no historical precedent.

33. Armenia was a party to the relevant international conventions, and was working to strengthen its legal framework with a view to fighting drug addiction and trafficking. While control over the regulation of all aspects of the production and supply of drugs and psychotropic substances had been tightened in health care and scientific institutions and in the chemical industry, severely weakened institutional accountability, as well as an underdeveloped system for formulating and implementing regulations impeded control and oversight. Over the past six years, narcotics-related crime had increased by 150 per cent; and the amount of illicit drugs seized had increased thirty-fold. Seventy per cent of the narcotics confiscated in Armenia originated abroad. Armenia had become a transit country for drug trafficking and lacked the technical capacity to control the problem. International cooperation was vital to that end.

34. Armenia was in the process of formulating a comprehensive drug control strategy taking into account the Global Programme of Action being advanced by UNDCP. Her Government was particularly concerned to reduce drug abuse among young people and high-risk segments of the population; families, society as a whole, civil society and the mass media had an important role to play in that regard, as did the education system. New and fragile States were particularly vulnerable to the drug trade and organized crime. Like other countries in transition, Armenia had suffered a sharp decline in living conditions. Job scarcity and low salaries only increased the temptation for people to "earn a quick income". Moreover, the country's economic system currently lacked risk-sustaining mechanisms such as insurance, a developed labour market and a stable social security system. The devastating effects of the 1988 earthquake continued to exacerbate those problems, as did the burden of 350,000 refugees from neighbouring Azerbaijan. Despite such constraints on resources, Armenia was elaborating new approaches to combat drugs and had recently established a coordinating mechanism within the Government as well as an electronic database on drug trafficking.

35. Much work remained to be done. Experience had shown that no matter how many drug pushers were caught, shipments seized and fields eradicated, drugs would continue to be produced while the demand remained. Long-term progress depended on a balanced approach to the issues of demand and supply. Concluding on a positive note, she said that there was a renewed sense among the international community that together it might be possible to make a world of difference in the health of nations and the lives of people.

36. **Ms. Newell** (Secretary of the Committee) referred delegates to the Web page of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (http://www.unhchr.ch) for unedited versions of human rights reports submitted to the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.